continue to put emphasis on visually appealing concepts for use in communications, package design, publications, advertising, marketing, and television and video production, all of which require the skills of graphic designers. Despite strong demand for both freelance and salaried graphic designers, competition will be stiff for the best jobs because employers are willing to make attractive offers to the most talented and creative candidates.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of visual artists were about $31,690 a year in 1998. The middle 50 percent earned between $23,790 and $41,980 a year. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $17,910 and the highest 10 percent earned more than $64,580. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest number of visual artists in 1997 were as follows:

Advertising	$34,800
Periodicals	33,000
Mailing, reproduction, stenographic services	32,700
Commercial printing	24,700
Newspapers	24,100

Earnings for self-employed visual artists vary widely. Some charge only a nominal fee while they gain experience and build a reputation for their work. Others, such as well-established freelance graphic designers and fine artists, can earn much more than salaried artists do. Like other self-employed workers, freelance artists must provide their own benefits.

Related Occupations

Many occupations in the advertising industry, such as account executive and creative director, are related to the fine arts and graphic design. Other workers who apply visual art skills include architects; landscape architects; photographers; and floral, industrial, and interior designers. Various printing occupations also are related to visual art, as is the work of art and design teachers. In addition, several occupational options associated with the Internet have emerged—for example, webmaster and Internet page designer. These jobs often require artistic talent, as well as computer skills.

Sources of Additional Information

For an order form for a directory of accredited college-level programs in art and design (available for $15.00) or career information in visual arts occupations, contact:

☛ The National Association of Schools of Art and Design, 11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 21, Reston, VA 20190.

For information on careers in medical illustration, contact:

☛ The Association of Medical Illustrators, 2965 Flowers Road South, Suite 105, Atlanta, GA 30341.

For a list of schools offering degree programs in graphic design, contact:

☛ The American Institute of Graphic Arts, 164 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010.

Performing Arts Occupations

Actors, Directors, and Producers

(O*NET 34047F, 34056A, 34056B, 34056D, 34056E, 34056F, 34056G, 34056H, 34056J, and 34056K)

Significant Points

- Aspiring actors face frequent rejections in auditions and long periods of unemployment; competition for roles is often intense.
- While formal training is helpful, experience and talent are more important for success in this field.
- Because of erratic employment, earnings for actors are relatively low.

Nature of the Work

Although most people associate actors, directors, and producers with the screens of Hollywood or stages of Broadway, these workers are more likely to be found in a local theatre, television studio, circus, or comedy club. Actors, directors, and producers include workers as diverse as narrators; clowns; comedians; acrobats; jugglers; stunt, rodeo, and aquatic performers; casting, stage, news, sports, and public service directors; production, stage, and artist and repertoire managers; and producers and their assistants. In essence, actors, directors, and producers express ideas and create images in theaters, film, radio, television, and a variety of other media. They "make the words come alive" for their audiences.

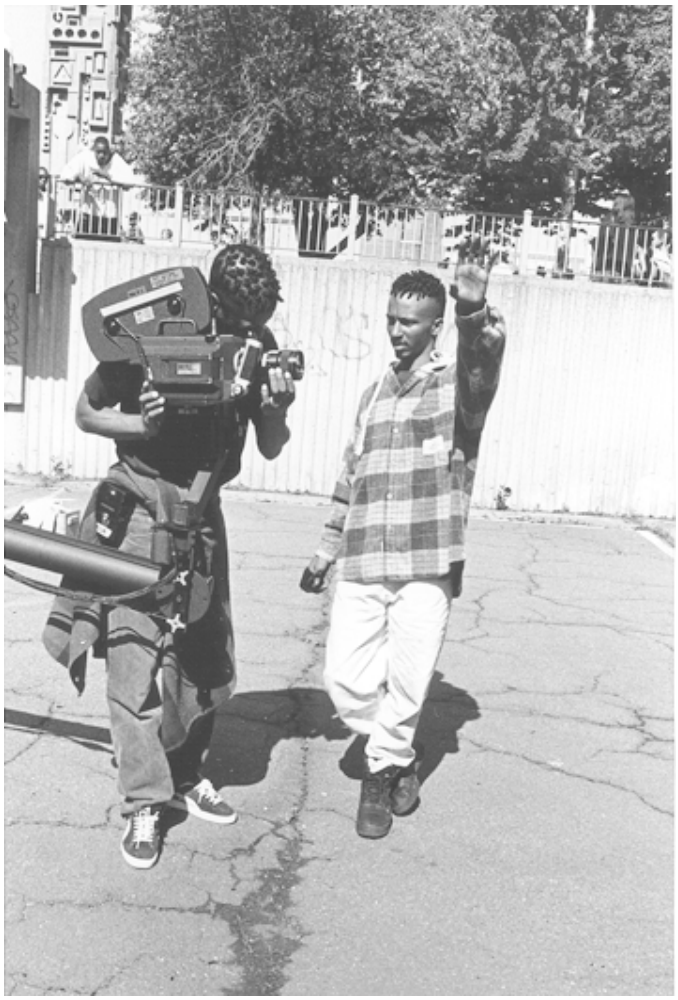
Actors entertain and communicate with people through their interpretation of dramatic roles. However, only a few actors ever achieve recognition as stars—whether on stage, in motion pictures, or on television. A few others are well-known, experienced performers, who frequently are cast in supporting roles. Most actors struggle for a toehold in the profession and pick up parts wherever they can. Although actors often prefer a certain type of role, experience is so important to success in this field that even established actors continue to accept small roles, including commercials and product endorsements. Other actors work as background performers, or "extras," with small parts and no lines to deliver; still others work for theater companies, teaching acting courses to the public.

Directors interpret plays or scripts. In addition, they audition and select cast members, conduct rehearsals, and direct the work of the cast and crew. Directors use their knowledge of acting, voice, and movement to achieve the best possible performance, and they usually approve the scenery, costumes, choreography, and music.

Producers are entrepreneurs. They select plays or scripts, arrange financing, and decide on the size, cost, and content of a production. They hire directors, principal members of the cast, and key production staff members. Producers also negotiate contracts with artistic personnel, often in accordance with collective bargaining agreements. Producers work on a project from beginning to end, coordinating the activities of writers, directors, managers, and other personnel. Increasingly, producers who work on motion pictures must have a working knowledge of the new technology needed to create special effects.

Working Conditions

Acting demands patience and total commitment, because actors are often rejected in auditions and must endure long periods of unemployment between jobs. Actors typically work long, irregular hours, sometimes under adverse weather conditions that may exist "on location." They also must travel when shows are "on the road." Coupled with the heat of stage or studio lights and heavy costumes, these factors require stamina. Actors working on Broadway productions often work long hours during rehearsals, but generally work about 30 hours a week once the show opens. Evening work is a regular part of a stage actor's life, as several performances are often held on one day. Flawless performances require



Aspiring actors gain experience in a variety of media.

tedious memorization of lines and repetitive rehearsals. On television, actors must deliver a good performance with very little preparation.

Directors and producers often work under stress as they try to meet schedules, stay within budgets, and resolve personnel problems while putting together a production. Directors must be aware of union rules and how they affect production schedules. For example, actors must be paid a minimum salary and can work no more than a set number of hours, depending on their contract. Additional restrictions are placed on productions using child actors and animals.

Employment

In 1998, actors, directors, and producers held about 160,000 jobs in motion pictures, stage plays, television, and radio. Many others were between jobs, so the total number of actors, directors, and producers employed at some time during the year was higher. In winter, most employment opportunities on stage are in New York and other large cities, many of which have established professional regional theaters. In summer, stock companies in suburban and resort areas also provide employment. Actors, directors, and producers also find work on cruise lines and in amusement parks. In addition, many cities have small nonprofit professional companies such as "little theaters," repertory companies, and dinner theaters, which provide opportunities for local amateur talent as well as for professional entertainers. Normally, casts are selected in New York City for shows that go on the road.

Employment in motion pictures and films for television is centered in Hollywood and New York City. However, small studios are located throughout the country. In addition, many films are shot on location and may employ local professional and nonprofessional day players and extras. In television, opportunities are concentrated in the network centers of New York, Los Angeles, and Atlanta, but local television stations around the country also employ a substantial number of these workers.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Although many people have the technical skills to enter this industry, few receive the opportunity to display their talent. To gain experience, most aspiring actors and directors take part in high school and college plays, or they work with little theaters and other acting groups. The best way to start is to use local opportunities and build on them. Local and regional theater experience may help in obtaining work in New York or Los Angeles. Actors and directors try to work their way up to major productions. Intense competition, however, ensures that few succeed.

Formal dramatic training or acting experience is generally necessary, although some people enter the field without it. Most people take college courses in theater, arts, drama, and dramatic literature. Many experienced actors pursue additional formal training to learn new skills and improve old ones. Actors often research their character's lifestyle and history, as well as information about the location of the story. Sometimes actors learn a foreign language or develop an accent to make their character more realistic.

Training can be obtained at dramatic arts schools in New York and Los Angeles, and at colleges and universities throughout the country that offer bachelor or higher degrees in dramatic and theater arts. College drama curriculums usually include courses in liberal arts, stage speech and movement, directing, playwriting, play production, design, and the history of the drama, as well as practical courses in acting.

Actors need talent, creative ability, and training that will enable them to portray different characters. Training in singing and dancing is especially useful for stage work. Actors must have poise, stage presence, the capability to affect an audience, and the ability to follow directions. Modeling experience may also be helpful. Physical appearance is often a deciding factor in being selected for particular roles.

Many professional actors rely on agents or managers to find work, negotiate contracts, and plan their careers. Agents generally earn a percentage of an actor's contract. Other actors rely solely on attending open auditions for parts. Trade publications list the time, date, and location of these auditions. Many of these auditions are only open to union members and union membership requires work experience.

To become a movie extra, one must usually be listed by a casting agency, such as Central Casting, a no-fee agency that supplies extras to the major movie studios in Hollywood. Applicants are accepted only when the number of persons of a particular type on the list—for example, athletic young women, old men, or small children—is below the foreseeable need. In recent years, only a very small proportion of applicants has succeeded in being listed.

There are no specific training requirements for directors and producers, so they come from many different backgrounds. Talent, experience, and business acumen are very important determinants of success for directors and producers. Actors, writers, film editors, and business managers commonly enter these fields. Producers often start in the industry working behind the scenes with successful directors. Additionally, formal training in directing and producing is available at a number of colleges and universities.

As the reputations of actors, directors, and producers grow, they are able to work on larger productions or in more prestigious theaters. Actors may also advance to lead or specialized roles. A few actors move into acting-related jobs, as drama coaches or directors

of stage, television, radio, or motion picture productions. Some teach drama in colleges and universities.

The length of a performer's working life depends largely on training, skill, versatility, and perseverance. Although some actors, directors, and producers continue working throughout their lives, many leave the occupation after a short time because they cannot find enough work to make a living. In fact, many who stay with the occupation must take a second job to support themselves.

Job Outlook

Employment of actors, directors, and producers is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through 2008. In addition, an even greater number of job openings is expected to arise from the need to replace workers who leave the field. Nevertheless, competition for these jobs will be stiff, as the glamour of actor, director, and producer jobs, coupled with the lack of formal entry requirements, will attract many people to these occupations. As in the past, only the most talented will find regular employment.

Rising foreign demand for American productions, combined with a growing domestic market, should stimulate demand for actors and other production personnel. An increasing population, a greater desire to attend live performances, and the growth of cable and satellite television, television syndication, home movie rentals, and music videos will fuel this demand. In addition to the increasing demand for these media, attendance at stage productions is expected to grow, and touring productions of Broadway plays and other large shows are providing new opportunities for actors and directors. However, employment may be affected by government funding for the arts—a decline in funding could dampen future employment growth.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of actors, directors, and producers were $27,400 in 1998. Minimum salaries, hours of work, and other conditions of employment are covered in collective bargaining agreements between producers of shows and unions representing workers in this field. The Actors' Equity Association represents stage actors; Screen Actors Guild covers actors in motion pictures, including television, commercials, and films; and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) represents television and radio performers. Most stage directors belong to the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, and film and television directors belong to the Directors Guild of America. While these unions generally determine minimum salaries, any actor or director may negotiate for a salary higher than the minimum.

On July 1, 1998, the members of Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA approved a new joint contract covering all unionized employment. Under the contract, motion picture and television actors with speaking parts earned a minimum daily rate of $576, or $2,000 for a 5-day week, in 1998. Actors also receive contributions to their health and pension plans and additional compensation for reruns and foreign telecasts.

According to Actors Equity Association, the minimum weekly salary for actors in Broadway stage productions was $1,135 per week in 1998. Those in small "off-Broadway" theaters received minimums ranging from $450 to $600 a week, depending on the seating capacity of the theater. Smaller regional theaters pay $400-$600 per week. For shows on the road, actors receive about an additional $100 per day for living expenses. However, less than 15 percent of dues-paying members work during any given week. In 1998, less than half worked on a stage production. Average earnings for those able to find employment was less than $10,000 in 1998.

Some well-known actors have salary rates well above the minimums, and the salaries of the few top stars are many times the figures cited, creating the false impression that all actors are highly paid. In reality, earnings for most actors are low because employment is so erratic. Screen Actors Guild reports that the average income its members earn from acting is less than $5,000 a year. Therefore, most actors must supplement their incomes by holding jobs in other fields.

Many actors who work more than a set number of weeks per year are covered by a union health, welfare, and pension fund, including hospitalization insurance, to which employers contribute. Under some employment conditions, Actors' Equity and AFTRA members have paid vacations and sick leave.

Earnings of stage directors vary greatly. According to the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, summer theaters offer compensation, including "royalties" (based on the number of performances), usually ranging from $2,500 to $8,000 for a 3- to 4-week run of a production. Directing a production at a dinner theater will usually pay less than a summer theater but has more potential for royalties. Regional theaters may hire directors for longer periods of time, increasing compensation accordingly. The highest paid directors work on Broadway productions, commonly earning $100,000 plus royalties per show.

Producers seldom get a set fee; instead, they get a percentage of a show's earnings or ticket sales.

Related Occupations

People who work in occupations requiring acting skills include dancers, choreographers, disc jockeys, drama teachers or coaches, and radio and television announcers. Others working in occupations related to acting are playwrights, scriptwriters, stage managers, costume designers, makeup artists, hair stylists, lighting designers, and set designers. Workers in occupations involved with the business aspects of theater productions include managing directors, company managers, booking managers, publicists, and agents for actors, directors, and playwrights.

Sources of Additional Information

Information about opportunities in regional theaters may be obtained from:

☛ Theatre Communications Group, Inc., 355 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

A directory of theatrical programs may be purchased from:

☛ National Association of Schools of Theater, 11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 21, Reston, VA 22090.

For general information on actors, directors, and producers, contact:

☛ Screen Actors Guild, 5757 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036-3600.

☛ Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, 304 Hudson St., 6th Floor, New York, NY 10013.

☛ American Federation of Television and Radio Artists—Screen Actors Guild, 4340 East-West Hwy., Suite 204, Bethesda, MD 20814-4411.

Dancers and Choreographers

(O*NET 34053A and 34053B)

Significant Points

- Although most dancers stop performing by their late thirties, some remain in the field as choreographers, dance teachers, or artistic directors.
- Most dancers begin their formal training between the ages of 5 to 15 and have their professional auditions by age 17 or 18.
- Dancers and choreographers face intense competition for jobs; only the most talented find regular employment.

Nature of the Work

From ancient times to the present, dancers have expressed ideas, stories, rhythm, and sound with their bodies. They do this by using